



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S.155

Elementary School Q155

**130-02 115 Avenue
Queens
NY 11420**

Principal: Gregory Jacobs

**Date of review: May 13, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Terrell**

The School Context

P.S.155 is an elementary school with 566 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 33% Asian, 26% Black, 19% Hispanic, and 2% White students. The student body includes 7% English Language Learners and 12% students with disabilities. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 95.0%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards	Additional Findings	Proficient
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	Focus	Proficient
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels	Celebration	Well Developed
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Additional Findings	Well Developed
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Additional Findings	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use assessments, rubrics and grading policies aligned to the curricula. Teachers conduct ongoing checks for understanding and students engage in self- and peer assessments.

Impact

Teachers provide meaningful feedback to students aligned to rubrics. Students are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use a variety of assessments to measure students' academic achievement. Data from Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) is used to develop the initial grouping of students at the beginning of the school year. As the year progresses, teachers use data from unit and chapter tests, along with performance based assessments (PBA's), to judge students' growth. *Fountas and Pinnell* running records are used to identify specific reading levels. In addition, data from the summative state assessments in English Language Arts (ELA) and math are analyzed to determine areas that need to be focused upon across the grades and to determine student mastery of concepts and skills aligned to the curricula. Teachers create exit tickets for students to complete at the end of each lesson to assess students' comprehension of the concepts and skills taught. Data analysis of the various assessments provides feedback to teachers as they design curricula and lessons. Rubrics are used school wide and provide students with actionable feedback and next steps.
- There is a school-wide "Benchmark Reading Levels and Marking Period Assessments" grading policy, which outlines by grade, the levels of proficiency in reading, on a continuum of 1-4. The policy also incorporates the month in which the level of proficiency is expected to increase. For example, in September, grade two students assessed at a *Fountas and Pinnell* level "F" or above, are considered to be at proficiency level "1". Students assessed at proficiency level "4" are reading books at level "L" or above. In January, grade 2 students, reading books at level "H" or below, are assessed at proficiency level "1" while students reading at proficiency level "4" are reading books at level "N" or above. The administration distributed a memo to all staff outlining the alignment of the proficiency levels to percentages. For example scale scores reflecting 90-100% = a level 4, while scores at 60-69% align to a level 1. This normed policy provides coherence across the school to support clear expectations for the measurement and interpretation of students' assessments.
- Teachers use the "Quick Check" in *GO Math!* to conduct daily assessments of students' comprehension of skills and problem solving. A small group meets with the teacher for re-teaching of a skill that challenges them in order to provide an opportunity for their demonstrating mastery. For example, during a classroom visit, the teacher was working with a small group of students to re-teach the steps on changing fractions to decimals. These students were then assessed to determine if they understood this concept. Several students articulated that they use rubrics to self-assess their writing and their peers'. When a student was asked what her next goal is she shared that she has to work on a more solid conclusion. She compared this to using ten solid blocks so that it does not crumble.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, most teaching strategies provide multiple entry points into the curricular to support higher order thinking. Most student work products and discussions reflect high levels of thinking, participation and ownership.

Impact

Student work products demonstrate high levels of thinking at their instructional levels for most students. Teachers provide strategic assignments, however students do not yet demonstrate ownership of their learning through discussions and participation across all classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use data to inform small group instruction within their classrooms. Across most classrooms students work in small collaborative groups or partnerships, while the teacher conducts a guided mini lesson. For example, in a grade 3 math lesson, the teacher led a discussion on the attributes of polygons. Students were asked to justify why a shape was not a polygon. After engaging in a discussion with their partner, a volunteer was selected to prove the answer by providing evidence at the interactive white board using visual representation. The teacher told the students to use the strategy of tracing and counting the sides of the shape, if they were not sure. In a grade four class, students worked in small groups completing an assignment in their math workbook on measuring time. The teacher worked with a small group re-teaching how to write five weeks as days. Students working at their tables shared that if they completed their workbook page, they could complete an assignment from the extension packet. While the teacher worked with students on the re-teach lesson, the majority of the students completed the same workbook assignment and some were observed discussing how to solve problems in the workbook with a partner. However, not all students were engaged in discussing the problems in the workbook or extension packet to support ownership of their learning.
- In a multi-grade special education class students were in grade level groups. A student was observed working independently on revising a writing assignment at the computer and indicated that he needed to add more details. The classroom teacher worked with a group discussing an assigned text. Another group of students were seated at their desks with their notebooks open. The learning objective written on the chart stated, "Stories help us explain the world to each other through the central message and the theme." In a lower grade classroom, the teacher directed a lesson on sorting socks by color to determine the greatest and least. While the students were able to identify the colors with the greatest and least amounts, the students were not directly encouraged to discuss their work. Thus, there were missed opportunities to support all students in taking ownership for their learning.
- In a grade five math lesson, the teacher modeled how to change fractions into decimals on a small whiteboard. The students then proceeded to watch a video with the teacher to provide re-teaching the process of changing fractions into decimals. The remainder of the students were observed working in cooperative table groups completing an activity in which they ordered fractions on a number line from the least to the greatest. Most students at the tables were observed discussing reasons to support the ordering of the fractions.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricular is planned and refined using data to support a variety of learners.

Impact

The curricular promotes college and career readiness skills across grades and subject areas. The refinement of the curricula results in all students having access to the content and to be cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- The school provides all students with curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards that integrates the instructional shifts. Specifically, the use of the *ReadyGen* English Language Arts (ELA) program provides all students with opportunities to engage in writing using text based evidence. The program also provides students with informational text selections of varying complexity and which require close reading. The *GO Math!* program is used to improve students' fluency in problem solving skills. The Science curriculum incorporates hands on inquiry learning through the *FOSS* program, while social studies is aligned to the New York State scope and sequence.
- Teachers use data to evaluate the needs of their students. The curricular is refined based on the results of the data. For example, the school inserted one period for students to use the *iReady* online program to support cognitive engagement. Data from the program is evaluated and supports students at their level of proficiency. Teachers use the Quick Checks in *Go Math!* to conduct re-teaching of skills as needed. For example, students are targeted after a review of the Quick Checks assessment to be given additional teaching of the skill.
- Student tasks are reviewed to inform teachers' revisions to lessons and planning group activities. Information from student's written responses reflecting an understanding of the informational text, such as author's purpose, is used to guide small group planning for re-teaching in ELA. The school also conducted a review of data and made a decision to revise the curricula to reflect a departmentalized structure for the implementation of ELA and math in grades 3-5. Teachers for these grades become expert in their assigned content area. The administration indicated that ongoing refinements are made to curriculum maps. For example, the math curriculum was modified to include math videos to be watched at home to support cognitive development of lessons that would be taught the next day, incorporating the flip classroom model of teaching.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Families successfully partner with the school to support high expectations for their children.

Impact

The administration and teachers hold themselves mutually accountable for high standards and professional growth. Families are provided supports to ensure their children's progress toward college and career readiness skills.

Supporting Evidence

- The administration provides the faculty with a staff handbook, which specifically states the expectations for all aspects of learning and teaching. In addition, all teachers receive a "Guide to Success" binder and the Scaffolds and Strategies Handbook. Training is conducted on Mondays for all staff during the extended day. The professional development team created a school-wide focus calendar to provide teachers an outline of professional development opportunities and expectations for the school year. Topics include the updating of rubrics and extension packets. Teachers meet with the principal early in the school year to set professional goals which are aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and receive ongoing feedback from observations and administrative walkthroughs.
- Teachers shared that they conduct intervisitations with their peers to gain knowledge of best practices. The use of the writing strategy RAPP (restate, answer the question, prove it with text, proofread and edit) has been adopted across classrooms as a result of these visitations. Following an intervisitation, a teacher reflected that she would try the practice she observed that included using a timer and having students use gestures and less words when they are talking and interrupting. Teachers also shared that they use the Professional Learning Form to provide reflections on the Monday professional development sessions. The form allows teachers to indicate one thing they will start implementing, one they will refrain from doing and one practice they will continue doing in their classroom, based on best practices seen and presented at the professional development session.
- A monthly calendar which includes a Newsletter from every grade is sent to all families. The calendar provides grade specific information around ELA, and math units of study. Parents are provided with strategies that they can use at home to support their children's academic achievement. In addition, interim progress reports are provided to inform parents of their child's performance. Parents stated that teachers are always available if they need to speak with them. Online resources are available to all parents through the school's website under, "School Resources." Workshops such as "Homework Help Night" for grades pre-kindergarten through grade 2 and Grades 3-5 were presented in October. Parents were also invited to engage in the "Cornell Parenting Skills Workshop" and Family Movie Night. Parents enthusiastically shared that the administration is always visible and approachable.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations. Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher work with a focus on improved student learning.

Impact

The work of teacher teams result in instructional coherence across the school for each grade. Teachers’ improved teaching practices are supporting increased mastery in students writing products.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers participate on teams and engage in protocols such as “Looking at Students’ Work” to improve classroom practices. This year, teams have focused on developing strategies to support writing proficiency across all grades. Teachers meet weekly in grade level teams to review students’ writing and discuss best practices to move students to the next level of academic growth. A review of team meeting minutes reflects that teachers follow a structured process in which they discuss the writing task and the student’s work to determine what the student does successfully. The discussion is led by a team facilitator and is recorded on Google Docs by the assigned recorder. For example, minutes from a meeting focused on students’ writing, the team shared that the student was using an adequate amount of text based evidence, a variety of linking words, a strong introduction and the topic and main idea were clearly stated in the writing sample. They concluded that the student needed to work on the correct use of past tense and present tense verbs, as well as, strengthen the writing of the conclusion. The team shared that they would model how to write a strong conclusion using a sample from a Performance Based Assessment (PBA) and provide explicit instruction on verb tense rules.
- The second grade inquiry team used a grade wide rubric to assess the writing of students who were in the bottom third of their classes. Each teacher had a sample of each child’s writing piece and provided feedback on the strengths and areas for improvement. The writing task required the students to complete a graphic organizer to develop a character profile. The information from the graphic organizer was then used to generate a writing piece, including the introduction, body and conclusion. In one of the writing pieces the teachers concluded that the student captured the character’s actions but did not use words to show how the character feels. They also, discussed the need for additional details in the body of the writing. The team agreed to use the RAPP writing strategy to support the use of more details. Recent data obtained from a review of the writing samples in students’ portfolios indicate increased growth in writing across all grades.
- Each month the administrative team meets with each teacher team to review how data is being used to move students to the next level. These “Data Talks” allow teachers to dig deeper into the data and evaluate successful strategies. The data is uploaded by class onto Google Docs and is accessible for all teachers to review. An analysis of the unit 1 PBA for grade 2 reflects a cumulative increase of 9.3 points. Across the school, grade level writing has shown ongoing positive growth.